

UNCLASSIFIED

Department of State

5/4/78

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

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NA-05 AID-05 IO-13 TRSE-00 DMG-01 XMB-02 EB-08
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6848

SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 6058

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, SHUM, AR, US

REF: BUENOS AIRES 6025

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED FOREIGN MINISTER MONTES
DESCRIBED RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AS "NORMAL"
IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN CLARIN AUGUST 3.
A FREE TRANSLATION OF HIS REMARKS ON RELATIONS WITH
THE US AND THE US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY FOLLOWS:

2. "RELATIONS WITH THE US CONTINUE NORMAL. THEY ARE
NOT OPTIMAL AT THE MOMENT, BUT THEY CONTINUE TO BE
NORMAL. THE SITUATION WITH THE US, HAVING DROPPED FROM
EXCELLENT TO NORMAL, SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS REFLECTING
A PERMANENT SITUATION. IT IS A CURRENT SITUATION WHICH
THE US AS WELL AS ARGENTINA SHOULD TRY TO BRING BACK
TO THE OPTIMUM LEVEL. IN NO WAY CAN IT BE SAID THAT
RELATIONS ARE TENSE OR COOLED. THAT WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT
TO SAYING THAT ARGENTINA AND THE US ARE GOING THROUGH A
VERY DIFFICULT PERIOD IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, WHICH IS NOT TRUE."

3. ASKED WHETHER BILATERAL RELATIONS WOULD CONTINUE TO
WORSEN, MONTES REPLIED THAT "THE PRESENT STAGE WOULD PASS
AND THAT THE MOMENT WOULD ARRIVE WHEN RELATIONS WOULD BE
ONCE AGAIN EXCELLENT."

4. ASKED TO DEFINE US INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF
OTHER COUNTRIES AND WHETHER IT WOULD BE TEMPORARY OR
PERMANENT, MONTES REPLIED: "WE MAINTAIN THE PRINCIPLE OF
NON-INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, WHICH IS WHY, AS I
HAVE SAID, RELATIONS WITH THE US HAVE FALLEN FROM OPTIMAL
TO NORMAL. ARGENTINA WILL NOT ACCEPT INTERFERENCE OF
ANOTHER COUNTRY IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS. I BELIEVE THAT --
THE US HAS A DIFFERENT DEFINITION WITH RESPECT TO WHAT NON-
INTERVENTION MEANS. FOR ME, THE DEFINITION IS CLEAR.
NOTHING THAT AFFECTS THE INTERNAL SITUATION OF OTHER
COUNTRIES CAN BE SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION IN FOREIGN POLICY.
THE US HAS A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION, BUT I
SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WHEN I SPEAK OF NON-INTERVENTION IN
INTERNAL AFFAIRS, I AM REFERRING TO ALL COUNTRIES AND NOT
JUST THE US. ARGENTINA WILL NOT PERMIT INTERVENTION FROM
OTHER COUNTRIES IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS. ON THE OTHER HAND,
I BELIEVE THAT THIS MATTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAS AFFECTED
OPTIMAL RELATIONS WITH THE US. I BELIEVE THAT IF THE US
COMES TO UNDERSTAND ARGENTINA, THE SITUATION WOULD BEGIN
TO IMPROVE RAPIDLY. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE SHOULD
NOT CONSIDER BILATERAL RELATIONS TO BE TENSE, BUT SIMPLY
THAT THEY HAVE FALLEN FROM OPTIMAL TO NORMAL."

5. ASKED ABOUT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY, MONTES SAID:
"I WOULD SAY THAT FROM MY POINT OF VIEW THIS POLICY SUFFERS
THE SERIOUS PROBLEM OF GENERALIZATION. ONE CANNOT GENERALIZE
ALL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD UNDER ONE ISSUE: NEITHER HUMAN
RIGHTS, IDEOLOGY, OR INTERNAL SITUATION, BECAUSE BY
GENERALIZING ONE DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE PARTICULAR-
ITIES OF EACH COUNTRY: WHAT IS THIS COUNTRY LIKE IN TERMS

OF ITS IDIOSYCRASIES, RELIGIONS, LIFESTYLE. FOR THIS
REASON, I THINK THE US HAS ERRED IN THIS RESPECT AND FOR
THIS WE ASK FOR UNDERSTANDING. ALL GENERALIZATION, IN
INTERNAL POLICY AS MUCH AS FOREIGN POLICY AND IN THE CASE
OF INDIVIDUALS, IS DANGEROUS. IF THE US UNDERSTOOD
ARGENTINA, ITS IDIOSYCRASIES, LIFESTYLE, IT WOULD RAPIDLY
MODIFY WHAT IT UNDERSTANDS TO BE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS.
I HAVE REPEATED ON MANY OCCASIONS THAT THE ONLY VIOLATORS
OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISTS. ARGENTINA IS
A COUNTRY THAT FOR MANY YEARS HAD HAD A TRADITION OF RESPECT
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. AND IN THIS AREA, I THINK WE COULD TEACH
A NUMBER OF OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING OTHERS MORE ADVANCED
THAN WE."

6. ASKED TO AMPLIFY ON THE "ADJUSTMENTS" WHICH PRESIDENT
VIDELA SAID IN HIS AUGUST 2 RADIO-TV ADDRESS MIGHT BE
NECESSARY TO MAKE IN TERMS OF FOREIGN POLICY, MONTES SAID
HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAD IN MIND. "PERHAPS,

RC

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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HE SAID, THE PRESIDENT IN SOME WAY HAS HIS OWN IDEA ABOUT CHANGING SOME OF THE PHILOSOPHIES WE ARE APPLYING IN FOREIGN POLICY." MONTES WAS ALSO ASKED HOW MUCH LONGER HE THOUGHT HE WOULD REMAIN AS FOREIGN MINISTER. MONTES REPLIED THAT THIS WAS UP TO THE PRESIDENT. END UNCLASSIFIED

7. BEGIN

COMMENT: WHEN MONTES' REMARKS WERE ISSUED, WE TOOK THEM AS A HOPEFUL SIGN, AS THEY WERE SPOKEN AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF CONTINUING OFFICIAL GOA ANIMOSITY TOWARDS THE US BECAUSE OF THE EXIM BANK DECISION AND A NEW WAVE OF EMOTIONALISM FOLLOWING THE MURDER OF ADMIRAL LAMBRUSCHINI'S DAUGHTER. THAT MONTES COULD STILL STATE IN PUBLIC THAT RELATIONS WITH THE US WERE "NORMAL" AND MIGHT EVEN IMPROVE, SUGGESTED TO US THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS NOT PREPARED TO ADMIT TO THE ARGENTINE PEOPLE THAT US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS HAD REACHED A DEAD END. LAST NIGHT, HOWEVER, THE FOREIGN MINISTER ISSUED THE AMBASSADOR A DIPLOMATIC NOTE (REFTTEL) BLAMING THE USG FOR THE DETERIORATION IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, THE TONE OF WHICH WAS MORE IN SORROW AND ANGER, BUT WHICH CONTAINS THE USUAL LITANY ABOUT INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF A SOVEREIGN NATION. (THE NOTE NEVERTHELESS ENDS WITH AN EXPRESSION OF HOPE FOR US UNDERSTANDING AND AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS.) WE ARE NOT CERTAIN ABOUT THE PORTENT OF THIS NOTE. ONE ELEMENT THAT SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE WEIGHED IS THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE'S RECENT COUNSEL TO THE AMBASSADOR NOT TO TAKE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S HARD LINE TOO SERIOUSLY. YET YESTERDAY'S NOTE MUST HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED BY JUNTA, OR AT LEAST THE PRESIDENT. MONTES TOLD THE AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY THAT ANTI-US FEELING RAN STRONG AND DEEP AT THE LAMBRUSCHINI FUNERAL (IN THEIR PRESENT FRAME OF MIND MANY OFFICIAL ARGENTINES BELIEVE THAT OUR PROMOTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAUSE IS AIMED AT CODDLING TERRORISTS, OR WORSE.). HOWEVER, MONTES SAID, THE GOA WISHED TO AVOID INFLAMING PUBLIC ANIMUS AGAINST THE US. ONE TEST OF MONTES' SINCERITY WILL BE WHETHER AND WITH WHAT DEGREE OF NEWSPLAY AND EDITORIAL COMMENT, THE CONTENTS OF THE MINISTRY'S NOTE LEAKS TO THE PRESS TODAY. END

CASTRO

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